

DATE: December 10, 1971

TO : David A. Hamburg, M.D.  
Chairman of the Search Committee, Professor of Medicine

FROM : Joshua Lederberg

SUBJECT: Chairman, Department of Medicine

Dear Dave,

This is in response to your inquiry of December 7th. I may have some additional suggestions later on but the first name that comes to my mind is that of Arno Motulsky. I know that you have known him for many years but for the benefit of the committee I am enclosing some biographic remarks on the occasion of his receiving an award from the American Society of Human Genetics.

Motulsky's standing in his own specialty is so stellar that it may, paradoxically, interfere with an appreciation for his role as a clinician and as a medical educator. Anyone who has known Arno over some period of time will, of course, realize that here is a man of extraordinary breadth and humanity and that these qualities have indeed contributed to his remarkable success in medical genetic research.

While, over the years, he has concentrated on this discipline, it is certainly one that by itself no longer requires any apologies as one of the mainstreams of medical progress. I would have to say also that he is just reaching the age when I believe he might welcome a broader role in a context where he could still continue to make use of his extraordinary skills and experience in medical genetics. Certainly such a combination would help repair some of the surprising gaps in our present roster.

I suspect that there may be some unenthusiasm about such an appointment on the part of those who are seeking a more explicit interphase with health care in the community. In my view that would be a hasty and faulty judgment that does insufficient credit to Motulsky's deeply felt sense of civic responsibility and I would urge that judgment on that score be suspended until the committee has had a chance to talk with him at first hand. I might say that his contributions to medical anthropology give him a perspective on problems of social medicine that, in combination with his personal sense of commitment to human welfare and his geneality in interpersonal relations, would leave nothing to be desired.

Sincerely yours,

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MOTULSKY, Arno